Supreme Court, U.S.
FILED
071039 DEC 19 2007
OFFICE OF THE CLERK

No.

IN THE
SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES

JACK S. SPEARS
Petitioner,

v.

STATE OF LOUISIANA,
Respondent.

ON PETITION FOR A
WRIT OF CERTIORARI TO THE
SUPREME COURT OF THE
STATE OF LOUISIANA

PETITION FOR WRIT OF CERTIORARI

BOBBY L. CULPEPPER*
TERESA C. CARROLL
J. CLAY CARROLL
525 East Court Avenue
Jonesboro, LA 71251
318/259-4184

* Counsel of Record

Attorneys for Petitioner

(a) QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Is the missapplication of construction fund statute of the State of Louisiana (La. R.S. 14:202) which provides for civil penalties instead of criminal penalties constitutional?

2. May a person be prosecuted under a bill of information that charges no crime?

3. May a bill of information be amended on the date of the trial and then a continuance (called a recess by the Second Circuit Court of Appeal of the State of Louisiana) be granted with the matter being refixed for trial under an entirely different jury venire three months later?

4. May a District Judge determine the amount of a civil penalty after a finding of guilty by the jury, based upon a pre-sentence investigation?

5. May the Louisiana Supreme Court wait two and one-half times its own regulations and rules before denying the writ, without same being a violation of the due process rights and right to a speedy trial of petitioner herein?

6. May the Louisiana Supreme Court refuse to recuse itself in connection with the consideration of whether or not the Louisiana Supreme Court timely decided an Application for Writs?

(b) LIST OF PARTIES

The parties herein are:

State of Louisiana

Jack S. Spears

CORPORATE DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

There is no corporate disclosure statement.

(c) TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
QUESTIONS PRESENTED	1
LIST OF PARTIES	2
CORPORATE DISCLOSURE STATEMENT	2
TABLE OF CONTENTS	3
TABLE OF CITED AUTHORITIES	4,5
CITATION OF REPORTS OF OPINIONS	6
BASIS FOR JURISDICTION	7
CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS AND STATUTES	9
STATEMENT OF THE CASE	12
DIRECT AND CONCISE ARGUMENT	20
CONCLUSION	22

(c) TABLE OF CITED AUTHORITIES

Page

Louisiana Cases:

State vs. Cohn
783 So.2d 1269, 2000-0313 (La. 4/3/01) ... 16,17

State vs. Reaves
376 So.2d 136 (La. 1979) 19

State vs. Weems
593 So.2d 358 (La. App. 2 Cir. 1992) 22

United States Supreme Court Cases:

Apprendi vs. New Jersey
530 U.S. 466; 147 L.Ed. 2d 435; 120
St. Ct. 2348 (2000) 16

Barker vs. Wingo Warden
407 U. S. 514; 92 S. Ct. 2182; 33
L.Ed. 2nd 101; 1972 U. S. Lexis 34 17,18

Blakely vs. Washington
124 St. Ct. 2531; 159 L.Ed. 2d 403;
U.S. Lexis 4573 (2004) 15,16,17

Louisiana Statutes:

La. R.S. 14:202 12,21

(c) TABLE OF CITED AUTHORITIES CONTINUED

Other Authorities:

U. S. Constitution 6th Amendment 17,20

Louisiana Constitution, Article I, Section 16 17

(d) CITATION OF REPORTS OF OPINIONS

State of Louisiana vs. Jack S. Spears
(La. App. 2d Cir. 3/17/05), 896 So. 2d 1280

State of Louisiana vs. Jack S. Spears, 2005-0964
(La. 4/4/06), 929 So. 2d 1219

(e) BASIS FOR JURISDICTION

(i) The decision of the Louisiana Second Circuit Court of Appeal, after remand by the Louisiana Supreme Court was on September 27, 2006. An Application for Rehearing was denied on October 26, 2006. The Louisiana Supreme Court denied an Application for Writ of Certiorari on August 31, 2007. Thereafter an Application for Rehearing was filed and an Application to Recuse the Louisiana Supreme Court in connection with said Application for Rehearing was filed. The Louisiana Supreme Court, without even commenting on the Motion to Recuse, denied the Application for a Reconsideration on November 21, 2007.

(ii) Same as i.

(iii) Not applicable.

(iv) This Honorable Court has jurisdiction under Supreme Court Rule 10 in that the Louisiana Supreme Court, a State Court of last resort, has decided an important Federal question in a way that conflicts with other state court cases and with Federal decisions, including a decision by this Honorable Court.

The Louisiana Supreme Court, a State Court of last resort, has decided an important question of Federal law that has not been, but should be, settled by this Honorable Court and has decided, by denying a Writ of Certiorari, an important Federal question in a

way that conflicts with relevant decisions of this Honorable Court.

(v) Rule 29.4(b) or (c) is not applicable.

(f) CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS AND STATUTES

La. R.S. 14:202:

Contractors; misapplication of payments prohibited; penalty.

A. No person, contractor, subcontractor, or agent of a contractor or subcontractor, who has received money on account of a contract for the construction, erection, or repair of a building, structure, or other improvement, including contracts and mortgages for interim financing, shall knowingly fail to apply the money received as necessary to settle claims for material and labor due for the construction or under the contract.

B. When the amount misapplied is one thousand dollars or less, whoever violates the provisions of this Section shall be fined not less than one hundred dollars nor more than five hundred dollars, or imprisoned for not less than ninety days nor more than six months, or both.

C. When the amount misapplied is greater than one thousand dollars, whoever violates this Section shall be fined not less than one hundred dollars nor more then five hundred dollars, or imprisoned with or without hard labor fer not less than ninety days nor more than six months, or both, for each one thousand dollars in misapplied finds, provided that the aggreggate imprisonment shall not exceed five years.

D. Any person, contractor, subcontractor, or agent of a contractor or subcontractor who knowingly fails to apply construction contract payments as required in Subsection A shall pay to the court, and the court shall transfer to the person whose construction contract payments were misapplied, an amount equal to the sum of the payments not properly applied and any additional legal costs resulting from the misapplication of construction and fund payments, including a fee charged by the clerk of court for handling such payments. (Amended by Acts 1960, No. 554, § 1, Acts 1984, No. 372, , § 1; Acts 1986, No. 1040, , § 1; Acts 1986, No. 625, , § 1; Acts 1990, No. 690, , § 1.)

Constitution of the United States, Amendment VI:

Restriction of Judicial Power

The judicial power of the United States shall not be construed to extend to any suit in law or equity, commenced or prosecuted against one of the United States by citizens of another state, or by citizens or subjects of any foreign state.

Louisiana Constitution of 1974 Article I, § 16:

Right to a fair trial

Every person charged with a crime is presumed innocent until proven guilty and is entitled to a speedy, public, and impartial trial in the parish

where the offense or an element of the offense occurred, unless venue is changed in accordance with law. No person shall be compelled to give evidence against himself. An accused is entitled to confront and cross-examine the witnesses against him, to compel the attendance of witnesses, to present a defense, and to testify in his own behalf. However, nothing in this Section or any other section of this constitution shall prohibit the legislature from enacting a law to require a trial court to instruct a jury in a criminal trial that the governor is empowered to grant a reprieve, pardon, or commutation of sentence following conviction of a crime, that the governor in exercising such authority may commute or modify a sentence of life imprisonment without benefit of parole to a lesser sentence which includes the possibility of parole, may commute a sentence of death to a lesser sentence of life imprisonment without benefit of parole, or may allow the release of an offender either by reducing a life imprisonment or death sentence to the time already served by the offender or by granting the offender a pardon. (Acts 1995, No. 1332, § 1, approved No. 18, 1995, eff. Dec. 23, 1995.)

(g) STATEMENT OF THE CASE

Ricky and Karen Kirkham entered into a contract with Spears Construction Company, Inc., regarding the construction of two chicken houses to be completed pursuant to ConAgra's specifications. The Kirkhams deposited money via wire transfer into a checking account maintained by Spears Construction Company, Inc. Under the terms of the contract, Spears Construction Company, Inc. was to pay for all necessary labor and materials with those funds. However, at the time of his arrest in May of 2000, the parties had encountered problems with regard to the completion of the contract and some liens were filed by sub-contractors and material suppliers with regard to the construction project. There was no evidence whatsoever at the trial that the liens were actually owed.

The defendant was initially charged by bill of information with one count of misapplication of payments as set forth in La. R.S. 14:202 with said misapplication being greater than $1,000.00. The defendant entered a plea of not guilty to the charge.

On July 29th, 2003, the parties appeared for trial. Prior to the trial commencing, the State moved to amend the bill of information to reflect the amount of misappropriation to be in excess of $10,000.00 to which the defendant objected. Said amendment was allowed and then followed by the State moving for a continuance due to the absence of an out of state witness which was granted over defense objection. (It was later determined by the Louisiana Second

Circuit Court of Appeal that a continuance should not have been granted and that what the District Court did without knowing what it did was to grant a recess. Of course, no recess was asked for.)

The trial this matter was refixed for October 27, 2003, three months later before an entirely different jury panel and was held on that date through October 30, 2003. The jury returned a verdict of "guilty as charged". The defendant was sentenced to serve four years at hard labor in addition to paying a fine of $500.00 and all costs of the proceedings. (The Second Circuit Court of Appeal in its original decision was apparently of the opinion that the sentence had been suspended.) The defendant was also ordered to pay $103,804.22. This was ordered under a portion of the statute in question which provides that anyone "who knowingly fails to apply construction contract payments is required . . . to pay to the court, and the court shall transfer to the person whose construction contract payments were misapplied, in an amount equal to the sum of the payment not property applied. . ." The District Court improperly classified this payment as "restitution."

The Louisiana Second Court of Appeal rendered a decision on March 17, 2005 reversing the decision of the District Court and entered a judgment of acquittal.

The Louisiana Supreme Court granted writs and reversed the ruling of the Court of Appeal and remanded on April 4, 2006. The Court of Appeal then affirmed on September 27, 2006 and denied

defendant's Application for a Rehearing on October 26, 2006.

An Application for Writ of Review was filed with the Louisiana Supreme Court which was denied on August 31, 2007. Defendant (petitioner herein) filed an Application for Rehearing arguing constitutional issues and the fact that the Louisiana Supreme Court, in violation of its own regulations, had waited two and a half times the time set forth in its own regulations for acting upon writs before acting in this matter. Also, a Motion to Recuse the Louisiana Supreme Court, was filed in accordance with the rules of the Louisiana Supreme Court. This Application for Reconsideration was denied on November 21, 2007, without the Louisiana Supreme Court acting on the Motion to Recuse.

(i) This is a review of a state court judgment. All proceedings in state court have been completed as of this point. The federal issue of the right of a defendant in a criminal proceeding to have a jury determine the amount of the payment (civil in nature) to be paid to an alleged victim in connection with misapplication of construction funds was raised before the Louisiana Second Circuit Court of Appeal, after remand by the Louisiana Supreme Court. The constitutional issue as to the right to a speedy trial or a speedy determination in a criminal case was raised in the application of Mr. Spears for a rehearing before the Louisiana Supreme Court after the Application for Writ of Review following the decision of the Court of Appeal on remand was denied by the Louisiana Supreme Court.

A reply brief filed in the Second Circuit Court of Appeal raising the constitutional issue as to who should decide the amount of misappropriation for the purpose of a civil type judgment was raised in the reply brief of petitioner herein and is quoted as follows:

> "In this case, the only determination by the jury was a verdict of "guilty as charged" referring back to the amended bill of information alleging misappropriation in excess of $10,000.00. Of major importance to the defendant is the fact that the jury did not determine the amount of misappropriation which was ultimately determined by the Judge in ordering restitution as a condition of his parole. On this point, in addition to the jurisprudence cited in our original brief, we would also cite this Honorable Court to the Sixth Amendment of the United States Constitution which guarantees the right of the accused in all criminal prosecutions to enjoy a speedy and public trial by an impartial jury. Recently, in the case of Blakely vs. Washington, 124 S. Ct. 2531; 159 L. Ed. 2d 403; 2004 U.S. Lexis 4573 (2004), the United States Supreme Court found that the defendant's federal constitutional right to have a jury determine beyond a reasonable doubt all facts legally essential to his sentence were violated the case was reversed and remanded. In that case, the Trial Court imposed and exceptional sentence of 90 months as opposed to the maximum sentence of 53 months standing on the facts admitted in the defendant's guilty plea after

making a judicial determination that the defendant had acted with "deliberate cruelty". The Court considered whether this violated the defendant's sixth amendment right to trial by jury and determined that it did. The Blakely court referred back to their case in Apprendi vs. New Jersey, 530 U.S. 466; 147 L. Ed. 2d 435; 120 S. Ct. 2348 (2000) with regard to the holding that every defendant has the right to insist that the prosecutor prove to a jury all facts legally essential to the punishment in his case. That clearly was not done in the case before the Court and, under the rationale of Blakely, a reversal is mandated as the record clearly shows that the Judge and not the jury, determined the amount of misappropriation to be $103,804.22.

Additionally, the State has cited the case of State vs. Cohn, 783 So. 2d 1269, 2000-0313 (La. 4/3/01) for the proposition that the Judge could determine the amount of misappropriation and not the jury. However, the only determination that can be made from the summary of the Trial Court proceedings by the Supreme Court of Louisiana is exactly what is stated by the State in brief and nothing else. That conclusion being that the jury specifically determined that the amount misapplied on both counts exceeded $10,000.00 and that the Trial Court sentenced him to imprisonment and suspended that based on probation with a condition of restitution. There is no specific language that the jury and not the Judge determined the amount of misappropriation so the case cannot be extended to justify the position of the State that the Judge

as opposed to the jury could determine the exact amount of misappropriation. Additionally, we would note that the Cohn case was decided prior to the United States Supreme Court decision of Blakely vs. Washington previously addressed herein."

Reference the Louisiana Supreme Court taking two and one-half times the self-imposed time limit for acting on writs, this is raised in the Application for Rehearing for the Louisiana Supreme Court. Quoting from same:

"The right to a speedy trial or judicial determination at every level is guaranteed by both the Federal and State Constitutions. See U.S. Const. Amendment 6, La. Const. Art. I, Section 16.

That the defendant herein had a fundamental constitutional right to a speeding determination of his Application for Writs. If the District Court had held this matter under advisement for 9&1/2 months, the District Court would have already been disciplined by this Honorable Court, if reported.

In support of our position herein see Barker vs. Wingo Warden, 407 U.S. 514; 92 S. Ct. 2182; 33 L. Ed. 2nd 101; 1972 U.S. LEXIS 34.

This Honorable Court has reasonable times built into its Rules which simply have been ignored herein.

We have not found any case directly on point on this issue but it raises a grave constitutional issue, when this Honorable Court does not follow its own Rules.

Although the U. S. Supreme Court affirmed the conviction in the Barker case there was some discussion about whether or not the petitioner in Barker had waived any claims. There is no way in this case that defendant herein waived anything because he simply had no control over it and we can find no mechanism in the Rules of this Honorable Court whereby this Court could have been mandamused to render a decision.

We would note that the ultimate decision in Barker has been criticized and distinguished, but not the constitutional issues.

As stated in Barker, the primary burden, in a case of this nature would be on this Honorable Court. Contrary to the Barker decision, in this case, as we have pointed out, the defendant had nothing to do with the delay.

As pointed out in the Barker, by Justice White and Justice Brennan, a delay may seriously interfere with the defendant's liberty or in this case, with "other rights." One of the factors to be considered in this matter would be the defendant's "anxiety and concern."

It would appear that an evidentiary hearing in this matter would be required. However, there is simply no procedure before this Honorable Court to have an evidentiary hearing.

In many cases, the delay can be blamed upon the defendant. However, in this case, the blame falls solely on this Court.

We would further note that this Honorable Court indicates that State vs. Reaves, 376 So. 136 (La. 1979) held that the delay of 3&1/2 months was sufficient to violate the defendant's rights."

(ii) This is not a review of a judgment by a United States Court of Appeal.

(h) DIRECT AND CONCISE ARGUMENT

Petitioner herein was charged with a bill of information under a statute which is unconstitutional because it provides civil remedies instead of criminal remedies. An amendment to the bill of information was allowed over objection of defense counsel, on the date that the trial was to begin. Thereafter, the State moved for a continuance which was contested. The District Court granted what she called a continuance and what the Court of Appeal called a recess. The recess ended three months later when the defendant was tried before a completely different panel. It is our contention that this also constitutes a violation of due process.

After the defendant was found guilty, the District Court, on her own, and apparently in accordance with a pre-sentence investigation had a figure suggested by the District Attorney's Office but never proven, that the defendant should pay $103,804.22 in the nature of a civil judgment although the court called it "a condition of parole." Under this Honorable Court's decision in Blakely vs. Washington, 542 U.S. 296, 124 S. Ct. 2551, 159 L.Ed. 2d 4003, that decision should have been made by the jury, not the Judge.

Then the Louisiana Supreme Court waited ten months or two and a half times the time restraints that the Court placed on its own self before acting on an Application for Writs. We contend that this was a violation of the Sixth Amendment, as was the

decision of the Judge instead of the jury about the amount of money that should be paid in the nature of a civil judgment by defendant (petitioner herein).

Then, the Louisiana Supreme Court did not even act upon a Motion to Recuse the Court to allow impartial judges to determine the issue as to whether or not defendant's right to a speedy trial and/or speedy determination had been violated.

The action of the Louisiana Supreme Court, in this matter was also contrary to its decision in the case of State vs. Weems, 593 So. 2d 358 (La. App. 2 Cir. 1992) in which writs were denied by the Louisiana Supreme Court. That matter was also handled by the writer.

Under La. R.S. 14:202 the misappropriation is either under $1,000 or over $1,000. There is no such crime as misappropriation of over $10,000.

CONCLUSION

For all the aforegoing reasons, petitioner (Jack S. Spears) respectfully requests that this Honorable Supreme Court of the United States grant review of this matter.

Respectfully submitted,

BOBBY L. CULPEPPER*
TERESA C. CARROLL
J. CLAY CARROLL
525 East Court Avenue
Jonesboro, LA 71251
318/259-4184

* Counsel of Record Attorneys for Petitioner

No.

IN THE
SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES

JACK S. SPEARS
Petitioner,

v.

STATE OF LOUISIANA,
Respondent.

MOTION FOR STAY OF EXECUTION
OF SENTENCE

Now into court, through undersigned counsel, comes Jack S. Spears, who, with respect shows and avers as follows:

1.

That Jack S. Spears has applied to this Honorable Court for a Writ of Certiorari to reverse the decision of the Louisiana Supreme Court.

2.

That Jack S. Spears has been notified through undersigned counsel to appear in court on January 3, 2008 for execution of sentence.

3.

That in view of the Application for Certiorari herein, the execution of sentence should be stayed by this Honorable Court.

WHEREFORE, Jack S. Spears prays that this Honorable Court stay the execution of the sentence in this matter.

FURTHER PRAYS for all necessary orders and decrees and for just and equitable relief.

BOBBY L. CULPEPPER*
TERESA C. CARROLL
J. CLAY CARROLL
525 East Court Avenue
Jonesboro, LA 71251
318/259-4184
Fed. Bar #925

* Counsel of Record Attorneys for Petitioner

Supreme Court, U.S.
FILED
(2)
071039 DEC 19 2007
OFFICE OF THE CLERK

83

No.

IN THE
SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES

JACK S. SPEARS
Petitioner,

v.

STATE OF LOUISIANA,
Respondent.

ON PETITION FOR A
WRIT OF CERTIORARI TO THE
SUPREME COURT OF THE
STATE OF LOUISIANA

APPENDIX TO PETITION FOR WRIT OF CERTIORARI

BOBBY L. CULPEPPER*
TERESA C. CARROLL
J. CLAY CARROLL
525 East Court Avenue
Jonesboro, LA 71251
318/259-4184

* Counsel of Record Attorneys for Petitioner

Judgment rendered September 27, 2006
Application for rehearing may be filed within the delay allowed by Art. 922, La. C.Cr.P.
****
On Remand
****

No. 39,302-KA

COURT OF APPEAL
SECOND CIRCUIT
STATE OF LOUISIANA

****

STATE OF LOUISIANA Appellee

versus

JACK S. SPEARS Appellant

****

On Remand from the
Louisiana Supreme Court

Originally appealed from the
Third Judicial District Court for the
Parish of Lincoln, Louisiana
Trial Court No. 46498
Honorable Cynthia T. Woodard, Judge

****

BOBBY L. CULPEPPER — Counsel for Appellant

ROBERT W. LEVY
District Attorney — Counsel for Appellee

CLIFFORD R. STRIDER, III
PAMELA A. STEWART
Assistant District Attorneys

****

Before BROWN, WILLIAMS and DREW, JJ

WILLIAMS, J.

The defendant, Jack S. Spears, was convicted of misapplication of construction contract payments, a violation of LSA-R.S. 14:202. The defendant was sentenced to serve a prison term of four years at hard labor and ordered to pay a fine of $500 and all costs of the proceedings. The defendant was also ordered to pay $103,804.22 in restitution as a condition of parole.

On appeal, we reversed the defendant's conviction and sentence and entered a judgment of acquittal. The supreme court reversed our ruling and remanded this matter for our consideration of the defendant's remaining assignments of error. For the reasons that follow, we affirm the defendant's conviction and sentence.

FACTS

Richard Joe Kirkham, Jr. and Karen Walker Kirkham ("the Kirkhams") were engaged in the business of raising chickens in Choudrant, Louisiana. In December 1999, the Kirkhams entered into a contract with the defendant, who was doing business as Spears Construction Company, Inc. to build two chicken houses for a price of $196,000. The Kirkhams obtained a mortgage to finance the construction. The contract specified that payment would be made in intermittent draws, contingent upon the completion of particular stages of construction.

Construction began on the project, and the first three draws were paid without difficulty. After the third payment, little or no further work was done on the project, despite a written demand by the Kirkhams to the defendant to complete the project. Although he had not completed the required stage of construction, the defendant demanded the fourth payment. When the Kirkhams refused to authorize the draw, the defendant walked off of the job. The defendant returned when the Kirkhams finally agreed to authorize the payment. By the end of April, 2000, construction on the chicken houses had ceased.

The Kirkhams began to receive material and labor lien notices from suppliers and workers on the project. On May 9, 2000, the Kirkhams filed a complaint with the Lincoln Parish Sheriff's Department, reporting that the defendant had

misappropriated funds under the construction contract.

The defendant was arrested and charged by bill of information with misapplication of contract funds over $1,000. The bill of information was later amended to charge the defendant with misapplication of construction contract funds in an amount in excess of $10,000.

A jury found the defendant guilty as charged. The trial court denied the defendant's motion for post-verdict judgment of acquittal, motion in arrest of judgment and motion for a new trial. Noting that the defendant had two prior felony convictions, both involving crimes of economic gain, the trial court sentenced the defendant to serve a prison term of four years at hard labor. Additionally, he was ordered to pay $103,804.22 in restitution for misapplied payments, a $500 fine and all costs of the proceedings. The court denied the defendant's oral motion to reconsider the sentence.

The defendant appealed. Concluding that the evidence was insufficient to support a conviction, we reversed the defendant's conviction and sentence and entered a judgment of acquittal. *State vs. Spears*, 39,302 (La. App. 2d Cir. 3/17/05), 896 So. 2d 1280. The Louisiana Supreme Court granted the state's application for writ of certiorari, reversed our ruling and remanded this matter "for consideration of the defendant's remaining assignments of error predetermined on original appeal." *State vs. Spears*, 2005-0964 (La. 4/4/06), 929 So. 2d 1219, 1224.

DISCUSSION

Constitutionally of LSA-R.S. 14:202

The defendant contends that the trial court erred in overruling his motion to quash the bill of information and motion in arrest of judgment, in which he argued that LSA-R.S. 14:202[1] was unconstitutional. In the motion to quash, the defendant argued that the provisions of the statute fail to put persons on notice of the activities prohibited under the statute.2 Following his conviction, the defendant filed a motion in arrest of judgment, asserting the same claim.

---

[1] LSA-R.S. 14:202 provides:

Contractors; misapplication of payments prohibited; penalty.

A. No person, contractor, subcontractor, or agent of a contractor or subcontractor, who has received money on account of a contract for the construction, erection, or repair of a building, structure, or other improvement, including contracts and mortgages for interim financing, shall knowingly fail to apply the money received as necessary to settle claims for material and labor due for the construction or under the contract.

B. When the amount misapplied is one thousand dollars or less, whoever violates the provisions of this Section shall be fined not less than one hundred dollars nor more than five hundred dollars, or imprisoned for not less than ninety days nor more than six months, or both.

C. When the amount misapplied is greater than one thousand dollars, whoever violates this Section shall be fined not less than one hundred dollars nor more

then five hundred dollars, or imprisoned with or without hard labor for not less than ninety days nor more than six months, or both, for each one thousand dollars in misapplied finds, provided that the aggreggate imprisonment shall not exceed five years.

D. Any person, contractor, subcontractor, or agent of a contractor or subcontractor who knowingly fails to apply construction contract payments as required in Subsection A shall pay to the court, and the court shall transfer to the person whose construction contract payments were misapplied, an amount equal to the sum of the payments not properly applied and any additional legal costs resulting from the misapplication of construction and fund payments, including a fee charged by the clerk of court for handling such payments.

2LSA-C.C.Cr.P. art. 532(1) provides in pertinent part:

A motion to quash may be based on one or more of the following grounds:

(1) The indictment fails to charge an offense which is punishable under a valid statute.

Louisiana law mandates that the Attorney General be served with a copy of the pleading challenging a statute's constitutionality so that the Attorney General can elect whether or not to exercise his statutory right to represent the state's interest in the proceedings. LSA-R.S. 13:4448; *State vs. Citizen*, 2004-1841 (La. 4/1/05), 898 So. 2d 325; *State vs. Schoening*, 2000-0903 (La. 10/17/00), 770 So. 2d 762; *State vs. Shumaker*, 40,275, (La. App. 2d Cir. 10/28/2005), 914 So. 2d 1156.

In this case, notice has been sent to the attorney general by this court, as mandated by LSA-R.S. 13:4448. At the time of this opinion, no response had been received. In any event, the defendant's argument that LSA-R.S. 14:202 is unconstitutional is without merit.

In State vs. Piazza, 596 So. 2d 817 (La. 1992), the district court quashed the defendant's indictment for violation of LSA-R.S. 14:202, declaring the statute unconstitutional. The Louisiana Supreme Court reversed the district court's ruling and upheld the validity of the statutory provisions, stating "[T]he conflicting penalty provisions of Section 202 do not render the statute unconstitutional, but may be construed together so as to give effect to both provisions, resolving any conflict in favor of the person on whom the penalty is imposed by applying the lesser penalty." Id. At 818.3 The court further noted, "The present case does not involve a conflict in the portion of the criminal statute which defines the conduct that will be considered criminal, but rather involves a conflict in the penalty portion of the statute." Id. at 820.

In the instant case, the main thrust of the defendant's constitutional argument involves an alleged vagueness in the "criminal portion" of LSA-R.S. 14:202, i.e., the provisions of the statute fail to put persons on notice with regard to what activities are prohibited. The defendant further presented a list of hypothetical facts in which the statute would not give notice of a crime.

To determine the constitutionality of a statute, we must follow the basic rules of statutory construction. *State vs. Shumaker, supra.* A statute is presumed to be constitutional, and the burden of clearly establishing unconstitutionality rests upon the party who attacks the statute. *State vs. Cunningham*, 2004-2200 (La. 6/13/05), 903 So. 2d 1110. A statute should be upheld whenever possible. *State vs. Shumaker, supra.*

To prove that a law is unconstitutional, a defendant is required to show that an ordinary person of reasonable intelligence could not understand and follow the law. *State vs. Hair*, 2000-2694 (La. 5/15/01), 784 So. 2d 1269. Broad language is not in itself vague, particularly where it is clear that the legislature intended to make criminal all acts of a certain kind. Id. Louisiana criminal statutes must be "given genuine construction, according to the fair import of their words, taken in their usual sense, in connection with the context, and with reference to the purpose of the provision." LSA-R.S. 14:3.

3In Piazza, supra, it was apparent that the Louisiana Attorney General appeared to represent the interests of the state with regard to the penalty provisions of the statute.

LSA-R.S. 14:202 provides, in pertinent part, "No person . . ., who has received money on account of a contract for the construction, erection or repair of a building, structure, or other improvement, . . . shall knowingly fail to apply the money received as necessary to settle claims for material and labor due for the construction or under the contract."

A plain reading of the activity prescribed by the statute is sufficiently narrow and gives adequate notice to those who would engage in such conduct, i.e., fail to apply monies received pursuant to a construction contract as necessary to settle claims for material and labor, that the conduct is prescribed. Thus, we conclude that the defendant failed to meet his burden of clearly establishing that the statute is unconstitutional. This assignment lacks merit.

Amendment of Bill of Information

In another assignment of error, the defendant contends that trial court erred, as a matter of law, in permitting the state to amend the bill of information on the day of the trial. The state argues the amendment was proper and non-prejudicial.

The defendant was originally charged by bill of information with violating LSA-R.S. 14:202, misapplication of payments in an amount greater than $1,000. On July 29, 2003, in open court, before the first prospective juror was called for examination, the state requested leave of court to amend the bill to charge the defendant with the misapplication of payments in am amount greater

than $10,000 under the same statute. The trial court permitted the amendment, over the defendant's objection.

The substance of an indictment may be amended before trial begins. LSA-C.Cr.P. art. 487. In a jury trial, trial begins when the first prospective juror is called for examination. LSA-C.Cr.P. art. 761. If a defendant can show that he has been prejudiced by the amendment to charge against him, he is entitled to a continuance. LSA-C.Cr.P. art. 489. The purpose of the continuance authorized by Article 489 is to protect a defendant from surprise or prejudice which may result from such an amendment. The defendant bears the burden of proving that he has been prejudiced by the amendment. The trial court has great discretion in deciding such matters, and its ruling will not be disturbed on appeal absent an abuse of that discretion. *State vs. Ignot,* 29,745 (La. App. 2d Cir. 8/24/97), 701 So. 2d 1001, *writ denied,* 1999-0336 (La. 6/18/99), 745 So. 2d 618; *State vs. Cleveland,* 25,628 (La. App. 2d Cir. 1/19/94), 630 So. 2d 1365.

In this case, the minutes reveal that the state moved to amend the bill of information before any prospective jurors were called for examination. Therefore, the trial court had not commenced, and the state was entitled to amend the bill pursuant to LSA-C.Cr.P. arts. 487 and 761. Further, the defendant's remedy for any potential prejudice was a motion for continuance. However, the defendant did not request a continuance, and he objected to the state's motion to continue.

Additionally, even if the defendant had requested a continuance, the defendant has failed to show that his defense was prejudiced as a result of the amendment to the bill of information. The only change to the bill was the amount of payments the defendant had allegedly misapplied. The defendant knew that he was to be tried for the misapplication of payments, a violation of LSA-R.S. 14:202. Thus, there was no element of surprise. The amount of money involved in the misapplication only affected the penalty upon conviction. Moreover, shortly after the amendment, the trial court continued the trial until October 28, 2003. Thus, the defendant was provided ample time to conduct any further discovery and to file any additional pre-trial motions.

The defendant also argues that the amendment to the bill asserting a misappropriation greater than $10,000 is vague in that it does not reflect a crime. LSA-R.S. 14:202 provides for misapplication of contract funds under $1,000, as well as funds in excess of $1,000. We cannot say that the trial court erred in allowing the amendment to the bill to charge the defendant with misapplication of greater than $10,000, as the amount of the misapplication determines the sentence under the statute.4 Therefore, the defendant's arguments lack merit.

4The state does not provide any explanation as to why it amended the bill of information to contain a dollar amount not included in the statute. A possible explanation is that the sentence for the offense is tied to the amount of the misappropriation, and $10,000 reflects the maximum sentence of five years.

Arraignment

The defendant also contends the trial court erred by failing to arraign him on the amended bill of information. The state maintains that the defendant waived this argument because he did not object to the court's failure to rearraign him.

LSA-C.Cr.P. art. 555 provides:

> Any irregularity in the arraignment, including a failure to read the indictment, is waived if the defendant pleads to the indictment without objecting thereto. A failure to arraign the defendant or the fact that he did not plead, is waived if the defendant enters upon the trial without objecting thereto, and it shall be considered as if he had pleaded not guilty.

In this case, the defendant did not object to the failure to arraign him on the amended charge before the trial commenced. Thus, the issue is waived. See, *State vs. Ignot, supra.* This argument lacks merit.

Motion to Continue

Next, the defendant contends the trial court erred, as a matter of law, in granting the state's motion for a continuance on the date of the trial, as the motion was not filed at least seven days prior to the commencement of trial as required by LSA-C.Cr.P. art. 707. The defendant also argues that the trial court erred in granting the continuance after the trial had commenced.

The record shows that on the morning of July 29, 2003, a panel of fourteen potential jurors was called, sworn and questioned. Following a recess, the state notified the trial court that one of its witnesses, Debbie Spears, was refusing to appear and testify because of her alleged fear of the defendant. The state made an oral motion for continuance, which was granted by the trial court over the defendant's objection.

A motion for continuance must be filed at least seven days prior to the commencement of the trial. LSA-C.Cr.P. art. 707.5 Nevertheless, in the interest of justice, the trial court may grant a continuance upon written motion at any time after a contradictory hearing. *State vs. Winfrey,* 1997-427 (La. App. 5th Cir. 10/28/97), 703 So. 2d 63.

LSA-C.Cr.P. art. 708 makes a distinction between a "continuance" and a "recess," as follows:

> A continuance is the postponement of a scheduled trial or hearing, and shall not be granted after the trial or hearing has commenced. A recess is a temporary adjournment of a trial or hearing that occurs after a trial or hearing has commenced.

In this case, the minutes reveal that the state moved for a continuance after the first panel of potential jurors had been called, sworn and questioned. Thus, the trial had already commenced, and the state was required to request a recess.

It is well settled that whether the motion was improperly styled as one of continuance or recess, the court may examine the motion as thought it had been properly denominated. *State vs. White*, 389 So. 2d 1300 (La. 1980); *State vs. Bertrand*, 381 So.2d 489 (La. 1980); *State vs. Dickinson*, 370 So. 2d 557 (La. 1979); *State vs. Mizell*, 341 So.2d 385 (La. 1976). Thus, although the motion may have been improperly styled as one for "continuance," it can be reviewed as if it had been properly named as one for recess. *State vs. Dooley*, 38,763 (La. App. 2d Cir. 9/22/04), 882 So.2d 731, *writ denied*, 2004-2645 (La. 2/18/05), 896 So. 2d 30; *State vs. Smith*, 25,841 (La. App. 2d Cir. 02/23/94), 632 So. 2d 887.

5A motion for continuance must be in writing but, under extenuating circumstances, an oral motion is sufficient. *State vs. Owens*, 30,903 (La. App. 2d Cir. 9/25/98) writ denied, 1998-2723 (La. 2/5/99), 737 So. 2d 747.

The standard of review of a motion for recess is the same as the review of a motion for a continuance. *State vs. White, supra; State vs. Dooley, supra.* The granting or denial of a motion for continuance or a motion for recess is within the sound discretion of the trial judge, and his ruling will not be disturbed on appeal absent a showing of abuse and specific prejudice. LSA-C.Cr.P. art. 712; *State vs. Martin*, 1993-0285 (La. 10/17/94), 645 So. 2d 190; *State vs. Dooley, supra; State vs. Gipson*, 28,113 (La. App. 2d Cir. 6/26/96), 677 So. 2d 544, *writ denied*, 1996-2303 (La. 1/31/97) 687 So.2d 402.

LSA-C.Cr.P. art. 709 provides:

> A motion for a continuance based upon the absence of a witness must state:
>
> (1) Facts to which the absent witness is expected to testify, showing the materiality of the testimony and the necessity for the presence of the witness at the trial;
>
> (2) Facts and circumstances showing a probability that the witness will be available at the time to which the trial is deferred; and
>
> (3) Facts showing due diligence used in an effect to procure attendance of the witness.

In this case, the record shows that although the state had not subpoenaed Ms. Spears, she and her attorney had assured the state that she would be present at trial. The state asserted that Ms. Spears was expected to provide material testimony which regard to the defendant's banking records. After securing Ms. Spears' voluntary agreement to testify, the state remained in constant contact with her and her attorney, and travel arrangements had been completed. However, the defendant, via telephone calls, had instructed her not to come to trial, and allegedly, made various threats to her. Defense counsel admitted that he and the defendant had spoken to Ms. Spears. Defense counsel informed Ms. Spears that she was not required to appear at the trial and testify because she had not been subpoenaed. Ms. Spears then rescinded her

agreement to testify. In its argument to the trial court, the state assured the court that Ms. Spears would be available to testify at a future date. Only on the day of trial did the state lean that the witness was refusing to appear, stating threats by the defendant as the reason.

Under these extenuating circumstances, we cannot say that the trial court abused its discretion in granting a recess. The trial court was satisfied by the state's allegations that the defendant had played a role in Ms. Spears' failure to appear.6
There is nothing in the record to show that the trial court abused its discretion or that the defendant was prejudiced by the delay. Therefore, this assignment of error is without merit.

The Kirkhams' Testimony

The defendant also contends the trial court erred in allowing Richard Kirkham to testify with regard to the cost of completing the project and the provisions of the contract. He further contends that the trial court erred in allowing Karen Kirkham to testify concerning their financial difficulties, her efforts to contact the defendant and that the defendant was "driving a brand new truck."

6In granting the state's motion, the trial court forbade the defendant from initiating any contact with Ms. Spears as a condition of his bail.

"Relevant evidence" means evidence having any tendency to make the existence of any fact that is of consequence to the determination of the action more probable or less probable than it would be without the evidence. LSA-C.E. art. 401. Although relevant, evidence may be excluded if its probative value is substantially outweighed by the danger of unfair prejudice, confusion of the issues, or misleading the jury, or by considerations of undue delay, or waste of time. LSA-C.E. art. 403.

A trial judge is vested with wide discretion in determining the relevancy of evidence; his ruling will not be disturbed on appeal in the absence of a clear showing of an abuse of discretion. *State vs. Miles*, 402 So.2d 644 (La. 1981); *State vs. Jackson*, 30,473 (La. App. 2d Cir. 5/13/98), 714 So. 2d 87, *writ denied*, 1998-1778 (La. 11/6/98), 714 So. 2d 87.

In this case, the defendant has not shown how the Kirkhams' testimony with regard to the defendant's failure to complete the project and the consequences of that failure was irrelevant in determining if funds were misapplied, as well as the defendant's intent with regard to those funds. However, it may well be that the testimony that the defendant was driving a new truck had no relevance to the case. The defendant objected and moved for mistrial, asserting the testimony prejudiced his case to the extent that he was unable to receive a fair trial. As the state correctly points out, the defendant did not request an admonition to the jury. Moreover, the defendant has failed to show how the trial court's ruling prejudiced his case. The defendant's argument lack merit.

Jury Instructions

The defendant further assigns as error the trial court's failure to give jury instructions as requested by the defense. Specifically, the defendant submitted 24 special requests for jury instructions, and the trial court denied all but one of those proposed instructions. The defendant contends the trial court erred in denying his request for 13 of the proposed charges.

Under our law, the state and the defendant had the right to submit to the court special written charges for the jury. LSA-C.Cr.P. art. 807; *State vs. Gipson, supra.* The requested charge shall be given if it does not require qualification, limitation or explanation, and if it is wholly correct and pertinent. Id. However, the trial court is not required to give the requested special charge if it is included in the general charge or in another special charge to be given. LSA-C.Cr.P. art. 807. Any requested special charge must be supported by the evidence. *State vs. Craig*, 1995-2499 (La. 5/20/97), 699 So. 2d *cert. denied*, 522 U.S. 935, 118 S. Ct. 343, 139 L.Ed.2d 266 (1997).

In this case, the trial court declined to include proposed jury instruction numbers 1, 7, 10 and 11, stating that there is no basis in the law which would support those propose charges. With regard to proposed jury instruction numbers 2, 4, 6, and 8, the trial court declined to include the instructions based upon his finding that the cases cited by the defendant were inapplicable to the instant case.

With regard to proposed jury instruction number 9, the trial court concluded that the statute cited by the defendant is a civil statute and is not applicable in criminal matters. The trial court disallowed proposed instructions numbers 12,13, and 14, concluding that those provisions of the statute refer to the penalty for the offense and restitution, matters which are within the discretion of the judge, rather than the jury.

We have carefully reviewed the instructions requested by the defendant in light of the instructions actually given by the trial judge. Each of the instructions requested by the defendant was either included in the trial judge's instructions or was an incorrect statement of the law which would have required correction or further explanation. Therefore, the trial judge did not err in refusing to give the requested jury instructions.

Further, errors in jury instructions are subject to the harmless error analysis. Failure to give a requested jury instruction constitutes reversible error only when there is a miscarriage of justice, prejudice to the substantial rights of the accused, or a substantial violation of a constitutional or statutory right. *State vs. Tate*, 2001-1658 (La. 5/20/03), 851 So.2d 921, cert. denied, 541 U.S. 905, 124 S.Ct. 1604, 158 L.Ed.2d 248 (2004).

In the instant case, the defendant has made no argument that his rights were substantially violated by the omission of the proposed jury instructions or that he was in any way prejudiced. Thus, we conclude that the defendant's argument that the

trial court erred in omitting the proposed jury instructions is without merit.

Motion for New Trial

The defendant also assigns as error the trial court's denied of his motion for a new trial. According to the defendant, he was entitled to a new trial because the misapplication of construction funds over $10,000 is not delineated in LSA-R.S. 14:202 as a violation of the law.

> In *State vs. Oliver*, 2003-1589 (La. App. 3d Cir. 6/16/04), 879 So. 2d 286, the court stated:
>
> [T]he penalty for a violation of La. R.S. 14:202 is determined based on the total amount misapplied. The bill of information in the case at bar does not specify whether the defendant was charged under section (B) or (C) of La. R.S. 14:202. Although value was discussed at trial and the jury returned a verdict finding a specific value, the bill of information did not properly charge the grade of the offense.
>
> While La. Code.Crim.P. art. 470 does not require that an indictment include a specific monetary value, the allegations in the indictment must be sufficient to determine the grade of the offense.

Id. at 287.

In the instant case, the amended bill of information charged the defendant as follows:

> JACK S. SPEARS committed the offense of misapplication of payments, as set forth in R.S. 14:202, in that he did, being a contractor, receive money on account of a contract with RICHARD KIRKHAM, JR. AND KAREN MICHELLE WALKER, for the construction or improvements of a building and did knowingly fail to apply the money received as necessary to settle claims for materials and labor due the construction or under the contract, said misapplication being greater than $10,000.

Although the bill of information did not specify whether the defendant was being charged under section (B) or (C) of the statute, it is clear from the specific language, "said misapplication being greater than $10,000" that the defendant was being charged under LSA-R.S. 14:202(C), since the amount at issue was "greater than one thousand dollars." Thus, the allegations in the bill of information were sufficient to determine the grade of the offense charged.

The defendant also argues that he was entitled to a new trial because the jury instructions and jury verdict form failed to provide for a determination of the amount of contract funds misapplied.

The record shows that the trial court read the bill of information to the jury verbatim, including the charge of misapplication of funds being greater than $10,000. The trial court also specifically instructed the jury that in order to convict the defendant of the offense charged, it must find, beyond a reasonable doubt, that the state proved every essential element

of the offense. The trial court proceeded to detail the elements of the offense and instructed the jury with regard to responsive verdicts, including, guilty as charged; guilty of misapplication of payments of $1,000 or less; or not guilty. At no time during the proceedings did the defendant argue that either the bill of information, the jury instructions or jury verdict was invalid due to the jury's failure to determine the amounts of funds misapplied. Nor did the defendant move for a mistrial. An irregularity or error cannot be availed of after verdict unless it was objected to at the time of occurrence. LSA-C.Cr.P. art. 841; *State vs. Bosley*, 29,253 (La. App. 2d Cir. 4/2/97), 691 So. 2d 347, *writ denied*, 1997-1203 (La. 10/17.97), 701 So. 2d 1333; *State vs. Hamilton*, 594 So. 2d 1376 (La. App. 2d Cir. 1992); *State vs. Brown*, 552 So. 2d 612 (La. App. 2d Cir. 1989), *writ denied*, 558 So. 2d 581 (La. 1990). The appellate court cannot consider an error with a jury charge unless there was a contemporaneous objection or motion for mistrial. *State vs. Neal*, 275 So.2d 765 (La. 1973); *State vs. Lee*, 529 So.2d 853 (La. App. 4th Cir. 1988). Thus, the defendant's assignment of error with regard to the erroneous jury instructions will not be considered by this court.

Motion to Reconsider Sentence

Finally, the defendant contends that the trial court erred in failing to reconsider the sentence, particularly in light of the failure of the jury to determine the specific amount of misapplication in question.

In this case, the defendant was charged with misapplication of funds in the amount greater than $10,000. The jury was provided with a list of responsive verdicts to the crime and could have elected to find the defendant either (1) guilty of misapplication of amount greater than $10,000, (2) guilty of misapplication of payments of $1,000 or less, (3) not guilty. The jury opted to find the defendant guilty as charged.

Neither the language of LSA-R.S. 14:202 nor the relevant jurisprudence requires that a jury determine the *specific* amount of funds misapplied. The language of the statute is clear: when the amount misapplied is $1,000 or less, the penalty is $100 to $500 or imprisonment for 90 days to six months or both. When the amount misapplied is greater than $1,000 the penalty is $100 to $500, imprisonment, with or without hard labor, for 90 days to six months, or both, for each $1,000 in misapplied funds, for a maximum of five years. As stated above, the defendant was charged with misapplication of an amount greater than $10,000 and was found guilty as charged. Therefore, the jury was not required to determine a specific amount of funds misapplied. This assignment lacks merit.

CONCLUSION

For the reasons set forth herein, the defendant's conviction and sentence are affirmed.

AFFIRMED.

THE SUPREME COURT OF THE STATE OF LOUISIANA

STATE OF LOUISIANA

NO. 2006-K-2704

VS.

JACK S. SPEARS

IN RE: Spears, Jack S.; -- Defendant; Applying for Writ of Certiorari and/or Review, Parish of Jackson, 3rd Judicial District Court Div. A, Nos. 46498; to the Court of Appeal, Second Circuit, No. 39,302-KA

August 31, 2007

Denied.

JLW
PFC
CDK
BJJ
JPV
CDT
JTK

Supreme Court of Louisiana
August 31, 2007

_____
Signed/Deputy Clerk of Court
For the Court

STATE OF LOUISIANA : SUPREME COURT

VERSUS : STATE OF LOUISIANA

JACK S. SPEARS : DOCKET NO. 2006-K-2704

APPLICATION FOR REHEARING

NOW INTO COURT, through undersigned counsel, comes JACK S. SPEARS and with respect, shows and avers as follows:

1.

That the instant Application for Rehearing is filed pursuant to Rule IX of the Rules of this Honorable Court and *State vs. Randall Lowe*, 938 So. 2d 140, 2006-2162 (La. 1/12/07).

2.

That writs were denied in this matter on the 31st day of August, 2007 and the notice was received by undersigned counsel on the 4th day of September, 2007.

3.

That the denial of the writ is contrary to the law and evidence, contrary to the Rules of this Honorable Court and in violation of the due process rights of Jack S. Spears.

4.

That this Honorable Court erred as follows:

(1) In denying the writs on the merits;

(2) Failing to either grant or deny writs for 9&1/2 months, in violation of the Rules of this Honorable Court;

(3) Denying Jack S. Spears due process of law under the U. S. Constitution.

5.

That Jack S. Spears attaches hereto a Memorandum in Support of the instant Application for Rehearing.

WHEREFORE, JACK S. SPEARS prays that a rehearing be granted in this matter and that on rehearing the original decision of the Court be overruled and that the decision of this court be reversed and the conviction of JACK S. SPEARS be overruled and reversed and all charges against JACK S. SPEARS be dismissed.

FURTHER PRAYS for all necessary orders and decrees and for just and equitable relief.

CULPEPPER & CARROLL, PLLC
ATTORNEYS AT LAW
525 EAST COURT AVENUE
JONESBORO, LOUISIANA 71251
PHONE: (318) 259-4184
BY: _____
BOBBY L. CULPEPPER
BAR ROLL #4646

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that a copy of the above and foregoing has been mailed, this date, in the United States mail, postage prepaid, to Honorable Robert Levy, District Attorney, P. O. Box 777, Ruston, Louisiana, 71273-0777.

Jonesboro, Louisiana, this the _____ day of _____, 2007.

_____
BOBBY L. CULPEPPER

STATE OF LOUISIANA : SUPREME COURT

VERSUS : STATE OF LOUISIANA

JACK S. SPEARS : DOCKET NO. 2006-K-2704

MEMORANDUM IN SUPPORT
OF APPLICATION FOR REHEARING

MAY IT PLEASE THE COURT:

STATEMENT OF THE CASE
AND PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Ricky and Karen Kirkham entered into a contract with Spears Construction Company, Inc. regarding the construction of two chicken houses to be completed pursuant to ConAgra's specifications. The Kirkhams deposited money via wire transfer into a checking account maintained by Spears Construction Company, Inc. Under the terms of the contract, Spears Construction Company, Inc. was to pay for all necessary labor and materials with those funds. However, at the time of his arrest in May of 2000, the parties had encountered problems with regard to the completion of the contract and some liens were filed by sub-contractors and material suppliers with regard to the construction project.

The defendant was initially charged by bill of information with one count of misapplication of

payments as set forth in La. R.S. 14:202 with said misapplication being greater than $1,000.00. The defendant entered a plea of not guilty to the charge.

On July 29, 2003, the parties appeared for trial. Prior to the trial commencing, the State moved to amend the bill of information to reflect the amount of misappropriation to be in excess of $10,000.00 to which the defendant objected. Said amendment was allowed and then followed by the State moving for a continuance due to the absence of an out of state witness which was granted over defense objection. Trial in this matter was refixed for October 27, 2003 and held on that date through October 30, 2003. The jury returned a verdict of "guilty as charged". The defendant was sentenced to serve four years at hard labor in addition to paying a fine of $500.00 and all costs of the proceedings. A condition of his parole is that he pay the sum of restitution in the amount of $103,804.22. A motion to reconsider sentence was made and denied by the Trial Court. The matter was timely appealed to the Second Circuit Court of Appeal which reversed the decision of the jury and found the defendant not guilty.

The State of Louisiana applied for writs to this Honorable Court which writs were granted and ultimately the decision of the Court of Appeal was reversed by this Honorable Court and remanded.

On remand, the Court of Appeal rejected the other assignments of errors and arguments made by defendant and affirmed the conviction.

On November 14, 2006, this Honorable Court acknowledged receipt of the Application for Writs from the decision of the Court of Appeal filed by defendant.

On August 31, 2007, 9&1/2 months following the filing of the Application for Writs in this matter this Honorable Court denied same.

ASSIGNMENT OF ERRORS

This Honorable Court erred as follows:

1. THIS HONORABLE COURT ERRED IN AFFIRMING THE DECISION OF THE COURT OF APPEAL.

2. THIS HONORABLE COURT ERRED IN FAILING TO TIMELY DECIDE THE CASE.

3. THIS HONORABLE COURT ERRED IN DENYING DEFENDANT DUE PROCESS.

ARGUMENT AND LAW

1. THIS HONORABLE COURT ERRED IN AFFIRMING THE DECISION OF THE

COURT OF APPEAL.

The original Application for Writs in this matter set forth in detail the position of defendant and is a matter of record before this Honorable Court. Therefore, we will not repeat same except to point out the constitutional violation under *Blakely vs.*

Washington, 542 U.S. 296; 124 S. Ct. 2551; 159 L. Ed. 2nd 403, U.S. LEXIS 4573 and 72 U.S.L.W. 4546.

2. THIS HONORABLE COURT ERRED IN FAILING TO TIMELY DECIDE THE CASE.

The failure to render a decision to either grant or deny the Application for Writs herein violates the Rules of this Honorable Court. There are numerous Rules of this Honorable Court which are called into play in this matter.

"Louisiana Courts of Appeal should resolve cases expeditiously." See Louisiana Supreme Court Rules, Part G, Section 10, 2.4.

Louisiana Supreme Court Rules Part G, Section 10, Performance Standard 2.3 states:

> "The Supreme Court of Louisiana should resolve cases expeditiously."

Louisiana Supreme Court Rules Part G, Section 6, III states as follows:

> "No more than 70 days should elapse, under normal and usual circumstances, between the argument and the rendering of the opinion."

Louisiana Court Rules Part G, Section 6, I:

> " No more than 120 days should elapse, under normal and usual circumstances, between the filing and the grant or denial of any writ application other

than a criminal *pro se* post conviction writ application . . ."

Footnote 4 to Louisiana Supreme Court Rule G, Section 6 states:

". . . all cases which have been fully submitted and under advisement for longer than 30 days, together with an explanation of the reasons of any delay and an expected date of decision" must be submitted to the judicial administrator."

In fact, if the District Court keeps the matter under advisement for more than 30 days, a party can file for the District Judge's salary to be cut off.

This Honorable Court has very strict rules for filing of pleadings before this Court that are enforced.

Writs in this matter were denied without any comment of any nature, no dissents with one word "denied." All seven justices voted to deny the writ after 9&1/2 months.

Obviously these were "normal and usual circumstances."

Whereas, according to the Rules of this Honorable Court, a decision should have been rendered to either grant or deny writs within 120 days, it took 285, almost 2&1/2 times the time allotted by this Court's own rules.

3. THIS HONORABLE COURT ERRED IN DENYING DEFENDANT DUE PROCESS.

The right to a speedy trial or judicial determination at every level is guaranteed by both the Federal and State Constitutions. See U.S. Const. Amendment 6, La. Const. Art. I, Section 16.

That the defendant herein had a fundamental constitutional right to a speeding determination of his Application for Writs. If the District Court had held this matter under advisement for 9&1/2 months, the District Court would have already been disciplined by this Honorable Court, if reported.

In support of our position herein see *Barker vs. Wingo Warden*, 407 U.S. 514; 92 S. Ct. 2182; 33 L. Ed. 2nd 101; 1972 U.S. LEXIS 34.

This Honorable Court has reasonable times built into its Rules which simply have been ignored herein.

We have not found any case directly on point on this issue but it raises a grave constitutional issue, when this Honorable Court does not follow its own Rules.

Although the U. S. Supreme Court affirmed the conviction in the *Barker* case there was some discussion about whether or not the petitioner in *Barker* had waived any claims. There is no way in this case that defendant herein waived anything because he simply had no control over it and we can find no mechanism in the Rules of this Honorable

Court whereby this Court could have been mandamused to render a decision.

We would note that the ultimate decision in *Barker* has been criticized and distinguished, but not the constitutional issues.

As stated in *Barker*, the primary burden, in a case of this nature would be on this Honorable Court. Contrary to the *Barker* decision, in this case, as we have pointed out, the defendant had nothing to do with the delay.

As pointed out in the *Barker*, by Justice White and Justice Brennan, a delay may seriously interfere with the defendant's liberty or in this case, with "other rights." One of the factors to be considered in this matter would be the defendant's "anxiety and concern."

It would appear that an evidentiary hearing in this matter would be required. However, there is simply no procedure before this Honorable Court to have an evidentiary hearing.

In many cases, the delay can be blamed upon the defendant. However, in this case, the blame falls solely on this Court.

We would further note that this Honorable Court indicates that *State vs. Reaves*, 376 So. 136 (La. 1979) held that the delay of 3&1/2 months was sufficient to violate the defendant's rights.

Respectfully submitted,

CULPEPPER & CARROLL, PLLC
ATTORNEYS AT LAW
525 EAST COURT AVENUE
JONESBORO, LOUISIANA 71251
PHONE: (318) 259-4184

BY: _____
BOBBY L. CULPEPPER
BAR ROLL #4646

THE SUPREME COURT OF THE STATE OF LOUISIANA

STATE OF LOUISIANA	: SUPREME COURT
VERSUS LOUISIANA	: STATE OF
JACK S. SPEARS	: DOCKET NO. 2006-K-2704

MOTION TO RECUSE SUPREME COURT
FILED ON BEHALF OF JACK S. SPEARS

NOW INTO COURT, through undersigned counsel, comes JACK S. SPEARS, who, with respect, shows and avers as follows:

1.

The facts of this case, are as set forth in the Application for Rehearing.

2.

Except for the issue as to whether or not the denial of writs by this Honorable Court was correct, two other issues are involved herein:

(1) A delay of 9&1/2 months or almost 2&1/2 times the period set forth by the Rules of this Honorable Court when the decision should be rendered unless there were unusual circumstances;

(2) Did this Honorable Court violate defendant's due process rights.

3.

Obviously this Honorable Court cannot in good conscience rule on the above two issues.

4.

Consequently, this Honorable Court should be recused and a seven panel court be appointed in accordance with law to handle the instant Application for Rehearing.

WHEREFORE, defendant prays that this Honorable Court be recused and that a seven judge panel be appointed by this Court to consider and dispose of the Application for a Rehearing.

FURTHER PRAYS for all necessary orders and for just and equitable relief.

Respectfully submitted,

CULPEPPER & CARROLL,PLLC
ATTORNEYS AT LAW
525 EAST COURT AVENUE
JONESBORO, LOUISIANA 71251
PHONE: (318) 259-4184
BY: _____
BOBBY L. CULPEPPER
BAR ROLL #4646

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that a copy of the above and foregoing has been mailed, this date, in the United States mail, postage prepaid, to Honorable Second Circuit Court of Appeal, P. O. Box 1528, Shreveport, Louisiana, 71165-1528 and Honorable Robert W. Levy, District Attorney, P. O. Box 777, Ruston, Louisiana, 71273.

Jonesboro, Louisiana, this the _____ day of _____, 2007.

_____
BOBBY L. CULPEPPER

STATE OF LOUISIANA

NO. 2006-K-2704

VS.

JACK S. SPEARS

IN RE: Spears, Jack S.; -- Defendant; Applying for Reconsideration of this Court's Action dated August 31, 2007; Parish of Lincoln, 3rd Judicial District Court, Div. A., No. 46498; to the Court of Appeal, Second Circuit, No. 39,302-KA.

November 21, 2007

Reconsideration denied.

CDT
PFC
CDK
BJJ
JPV
JTK
JLW

Supreme Court of Louisiana

_____

Signed/Deputy Clerk of Court
For the Court